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The Deliverymen of Florentine Comedy: 1543-1555

Abstract

Renaissance Italian comedy is often accused of banality the more the sixteenth century pushes forward. Tireless re-workings of recognizable plots and themes – from Athens and Rome, Boccaccio's stories, Machiavelli's theater, and Ariosto's, too – are all too common in the proliferation of printed editions, of literary circles, and of amateur dramaturges themselves. However, in mid-sixteenth century Florence, several members of the Florentine Academy, including Giovanni Battista Gelli, Francesco D'Ambra, and Giovanni Maria Cecchi, signal innovation in the compendium of familiar storylines as they stage lively urban environments and change in the make-up of society. Building on work of Virginia Cox and Sarah G. Ross, I view this brand of Florentine comedy as one that unlocks the door to ordinary realities and "everyday renaissances" of the period. This study observes the novelty of quotidian Florence in the onstage portrayals of the *zanaiuolo*, a deliveryman of predominantly foodstuffs, in Academy dramas. Purveyors who work as contractually employed individuals are an unusual social class of culinary workers who act *and interact* on their own accord. Although deliverymen are liminal to the core action of the drama, I argue that they demonstrate a playwright's willingness to stage *speculum consuetudinis*. The simple inclusion of a deliveryman in the character list demonstrates sixteenth-century Florence (and its comedy) to be a locus of developing municipal professions. Their language and interaction reveal to us the dynamics of cultural exchange and developing residential and commercial areas of the city. Moreover, their presence on stage confirms the ideology of their creators, who are dedicated to rendering literature and theater accessible to a larger audience of upper-middle class artisans and intellectuals such as themselves. In this article, I prove how peculiar deliverymen stand as examples of cultural encounter and mobility in the urban cityscape of sixteenth-century Florence.

Keywords: Renaissance Italian comedy; Florence; deliverymen; Giovanni Battista Gelli; Giovanni Maria Cecchi

Renaissance Italian comedy has often been accused of banality the more the sixteenth century pushes forward. Tireless re-workings of recognizable plots and themes – from Athens and Rome, Boccaccio's stories, Mach-

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iavelli's theater, and Ariosto's, too – are all too common in the proliferation of printed editions, of literary circles, and of amateur dramaturges themselves. However, in mid-sixteenth-century Florence, several members of the Florentine Academy, including Giovanni Battista Gelli, Francesco D'Ambra, Anton Francesco Grazzini (Il Lasca), and Giovanni Maria Cecchi, drawn upon the municipal consciousness of their work by dedicating more space to images of contemporary peoples and customs. This study observes one such example of novelty in the onstage portrayals of the *zanaiuolo*, a deliveryman. The culinary workers are depicted as contractually employed individuals who represent a new group of food purveyors, acting and interacting freely in society. Although they are liminal to the core action of the drama, a new figure for the cast signals innovation among familiar storylines and speaks to the make-up of Florentine society, cultural identity, and mobility.

Building on the recent work of Virginia Cox and Sarah G. Ross and integrating its perspective into Renaissance theatre studies, I view this brand of Florentine comedy as one that unlocks the door to multiple voices and more modest, "everyday" renaissances of the period. On stage and in society, Florence is shown to be a locus of developing urban professions. In fact, the language and interaction of deliverymen suggest the dynamics of identity and cultural exchange as well as developing residential and commercial areas of the city. In this article, I will present three examples of zanaiuoli in comedies by Giovan Battista Gelli and Giovanni Maria Cecchi. I argue that the mere presence of deliverymen with speaking roles in the cast demonstrates the value of a closer look at mid sixteenth-century Florentine comedy, and it confirms the dedication of their creators to rendering literature and theater accessible to a larger audience of upper-middle class artisans and intellectuals such as themselves. Ultimately, I will suggest that the interactions of these understudied deliverymen stand as examples of cultural encounter and mobility in the urban cityscape of sixteenth-century Florence.

Indeed, the theatre of the Florentine Academy under Cosimo I combines its desire to innovate with its admiration of the past by faithfully following the creed of Cicero handed down by Donatus: *comoedia est imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis*. Florentine Academy dramaturges' own status as members of a growing upper middle, merchant, artisan, and scholarly class emancipated them, to a certain degree, from writing comedy intended exclusively for the Medici court (even though generally sponsored by the family and its network), and it gave them access to raw material for a dynamic representation of the ordinary realities of the city. While Florence's representative arts under Lorenzo the Magnificent and his grandson Cosimo I are largely remembered for their lavish festivities and "high cul-

ture", ceremonial court spectacles, there were undoubtedly many more inconspicuous agents of cultural and economic development in the growing urban areas of the peninsula. As Virginia Cox has recently pointed out, the Renaissance stands on the backs of many men and women who participated in quieter ways in the all-encompassing renewal of classical culture and the innovation that carried forth into the century to follow (2016: 1-2). Sara Mamone points to this underlying current of Florentine theatre in the works of the seventeenth-century academies and confraternities who are tied to the fluidity of civil life and who put the entire community on display (2004: 18-19). Mamone assesses the production of religious and intellectual groups under Cosimo II and Ferdinand II, while I find reason to reevaluate the work of Florentine Academy members, Gelli and Cecchi, through the figure of the *zanaiuolo*. Sarah G. Ross has also recently investigated the phenomenon that she entitles *Everyday Renaissances* by surveying the drive of more modest Venetian citizens for learning and literature. She states:

> Scholars and broader audiences alike now tend to level charges of elitism at "the Renaissance" as a cultural phenomenon, and with some justice. . . . Yet *Everyday Renaissances* claims that ordinary people also participated energetically in culture, and that attending to them offers a sharper picture of the era's intellectual and literary ferment. (2016: 1)

This fresh perspective on the significance and development of the Renaissance in Venice also unlocks the door to mid-century Florentine Academy dramaturges interested in divulgating learned materials and in staging the lesser-known professions considered in this study.

The *zanaiuolo* is a core example of originality in the form of *speculum consuetudinis*. The *zanaiuolo* is a declared profession in the census data, the *Descritione delle bocche di Firenz*e, of 1562. In the four historic neighborhoods, there are sixteen individuals identifying as deliverymen and the widow of a late professional (ASF, Misc. medicea, 1562, busta 224). An intuitive etymological definition of a *zanaiuolo* is one who, by profession, carries a wooden basket strapped to the back; *zana*, a small wooden basket, and *-aiuolo*, a typical suffix given to professions, is a compound term readily understood also by recalling the contemporary Italian word zaino denoting a 'backpack'. Although zana is a word of Lombard origin, in current Italian dictionaries it is considered an obsolete word of Tuscan vernaculars and is found with an orthographic change (*zanaiolo*). One reputable dictionary, Lo Zingarelli, defines the profession as "chi portava merci a domicilio con la zana" [the person who would bring goods to the home with a chest]. The *Grande Dizionario Italiano* of the editor Hoepli echoes the definition of Zingarelli with non-descriptive merci as the goods frequently car-

ried by *zanaiuoli*, while a third contemporary source Garzanti Linguistica has eliminated the term from its publications. Historically, the Accademia della Crusca maintained the term in its printed dictionaries into the eighteenth century. In the fourth edition (1729-1738) of the *Vocabolario degli accademici della Crusca*, the definition of the term lo *zanaiuolo* reads: "colui, che prezzolato provvede, e porta altrui colla zana robe per lo più da mangiare" (he, who for a fee, brings to others with his basket things above all to eat).

Editors of Florentine theatre and *novella* have defined and interpreted lo zanaiuolo in various ways. Gaetano Milanesi's 1856 Le Monnier edition of Giovan Maria Cecchi's comedies insists that the zanaiuolo is a "facchino che porta pesi e robe colla zana" (a porter who brings items that weigh and [other] things with a chest) (1953: 144). In a glossary accompanying the theatre of Anton Francesco Grazzini, il Lasca, lo *zanaiuolo* is understood by Giovanni Grazzini as a *vivandiere* ("a seller of meats") (630).[1] In Chiara Cassiani's monographic volume on Giovan Battista Gelli, she describes a *zanaiuolo* as a *forestiero*, who does the job of a *facchino* and may cook in the homes of others (2006: 250). This definition mirrors that of the *Dizionario della lingua italiana* compiled by Niccolò Tommaseo and Bernardo Bellini which offers the definition of the Accademia della Crusca but adds "e anche talvolta le [robe per lo più da mangiare] cucinava" ("and also at times he cooked them [things above all to eat]").[2] In line with these definitions and

[1] Giovanni Grazzini is the sole editor of the works of il Lasca. However, he thanks Bruno Migliorini in the preface to the glossary for his invaluable assistance and advice defining some terms. Given its obscure nature, I strongly believe *zanaiuolo* to be one of the terms with which Migliorini assisted.

[2] This definition is found in the *Tommaseo Online* of the Accademia della Crusca and the Editor Zanichelli. The entry also contains reference to a Tuscan proverb "Chi ha da essere zanajuolo nasce col manico in mano" and a note from the nineteenth-century philologist Pietro Fanfani who recalls that "D'Ambra chiama *Zanajuolo* (Bernard. att. V. scen. IX.), quello che altrove ha chiamato Cuoco." In the *Dizionario Etimologico della Lingua italiana* edited by Manlio Cortelazzo and Paolo Zolli "zanaiuolo" is not an entry but can be found referenced under the word "zanni" as the similarity in the two words quickly comes to mind. However, a relationship between *zanaiuoli* of Florentine Academy comedies and the Zanni of *Commedia dell'arte* is tenuous because the supposed etymology of 'zanni' speaks to the Venetian dialect as the dictionary suggests (1979: 1846). Still it is tempting to consider the *zanaiuolo* and the *Zanni* of the *Commedia dell'arte* as natural brothers. However, I lack any conclusive evidence that would suggest that the two are one in the same in evolution. A *zanaiuolo* is not a servant of a single *padrone* and is highly associated with foodstuffs, but not insatiable hunger. Furthermore, the zanaiuolo is a profession declared by members of the community in the 1562 census, whereas, when I have found *zanni* as a profession – for example in Tommaso Garzoni's *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* – he is clearly a stage actor or buffon. For references to the *zanaiuolo* as profession, I should also mention a letter

in order to capture the culinary aspect of his work, I have elected to translate zanaiuolo as deliveryman.[3]

Through a close textual study, I will examine three depictions of deliverymen in differing circumstances to provide the breadth of their interactions.[4] I consider their exchanges on stage within a tendency towards mirror images of society and their realistic implications. Franco Fido has noticed Gelli and his contemporaries' particular keenness for contemporary culture, which they embed into classical structure and flavor. Reflecting on Gelli's prologue of *La sporta*, Fido confirms: "Gelli not only accepts the Latin definition [of *comedia*], but is well aware of its, so to say, realistic implications: and this, we shall see, truly corresponds to the interest in everyday life that we find in several Florentine comedies, by Gelli, Lasca, and Cecchi, toward the middle of the century" (86). Of course, comedies, and mirrors, also distort images and examples of budding stereotypes and probable exaggerations will be drawn out. And while it is my intent to prove a zanaiuolo ultimately different from typical servants, I look to the stile comico of a fixed scene, of stylized encounters among *padroni* and *servi*, to evaluate these differences.

The Comedies of Giovan Battista Gelli

Giovan Battista Gelli, a well-known scholar-artisan of sixteenth-century Florence, included a *zanaiuolo* in *La sporta* in 1543 and *Lo errore* in 1555. For much of his life, Gelli held the two vocations of shoemaker (*calzaiuolo*) by day, and member of the literati at the Florentine Academy in the evening, obtaining reputable positions of power within the Academy ranks and in Florentine political life as a member of the Twelve Good Men. He was censor of the Academy three times; in 1548 he became consul and, in

of Machiavelli's to Francesco Vettori and one of Michelangelo Buonarroti to his brother from 1507.

[3] I believe porter is an acceptable translation for *facchino* although some translators may use bellhop. If we were to imagine today's cosmopolitan and urban areas another option may be a runner. My choice of deliveryman is the first and only translation into English at this time. All translations from Italian to English are my own. The works of Gelli, D'Ambra, Cecchi's that I consider have never been translated nor has the critical work of the scholars cited in Italian in this paper.

[4] As more and more older editions are digitized, I find more inclusions and mentions of deliverymen. To date I have found the following occurences: Giovan Battista Gelli's *La sporta* and *Lo errore*, Francesco D'Ambra's *I Bernardi*, Giovanni Maria Cecchi's *L'ammalata*, *Le cedole*, *La serpe*, Anton Francesco Grazzini's *La spiritata* and *Le cene*, in a comedy by Lionardo Salviati, another Academy member, as well as in some Tuscan proverbs and in the letters mentioned previously.

1553, by will of the Grand Duke Cosimo I, he delivered and published in-depth commentaries on the first 26 cantos of the *Inferno*. The idea that even the shoemaker in Florence is a man of letters was exactly the reputation Florence enjoyed during the Renaissance and into the following centuries.[5] The majority of Gelli's posthumous success stems from his two dialogical works: *I capricci del bottaio* and the *Circe*; yet his talent for popular speech and themes can be seen across his production, no doubt aided by the rich life experiences afforded by his double role of artisan and scholar. It is not a surprise that his work in comedy follows Roman models, but we also find in it consistent originality in the figure of the deliveryman.

Gelli's first comedy *La Sporta* (1543) is modeled on Plautus' *Aulularia*. Throughout the play Ghirigoro, a desperately avaricious old man who refuses to marry his only daughter to a man of higher class for fear of future financial obligations, is subjected to ridicule. All members of the cast are aware that his only concern is sufficiently protecting his *sporta*, a wooden chest of money, from external and in-house threats. This foolish behavior guarantees him mockery from all sides, including from the *zanaiuolo* Polo and a servant, Berto. Alongside Berto, Polo arrives at the home of Ghirigoro in order to deliver and cook goods for a dinner offered by Lapo, another nobleman of the drama.

Notwithstanding its classical model, *La sporta*'s *zanaiuolo* should stem from the observation of customs contemporary to Gelli. No traces of the location of a performance or the company of actors are easily found, yet in the dedicatory letter of the published drama, Gelli attempts to respond to criticisms that he states were made during a performance and to have read the comedy to Cosimo I. The criticisms have little bearing on the figure of the zanaiuolo aside from the language that Gelli employs in the drama, which will be discussed later. Thus the zanaiuolo Polo appears in Act Four for three scenes in which he initially satisfies his terms of employment by bringing food to Ghirigoro's home with the intent to prepare it there.[6] The

[5] In his monograph on Gelli and the Florentine Academy, Armand De Gaetano explains that Gelli purposefully decided to remain an artisan in order to sustain economic independence: "He could, like others with less ability, have found steady employment at the court of the Medici, but he refused to do more than occasional services for it… Furthermore Gelli believed that manual work was edifying" (1976: 33). In the *Capricci* Gelli does not fail to mention with pride ancient authors who also exercised a trade, or an *arte*. De Gaetano also references others artisan-scholars, like Gelli, to come out of the fifteenth and sixteenth-century Renaissance culture: Michele Capri of Florence; Jacopo *sellaio* of Bologna; a shoemaker in Venice; Camerino *legnajuolo*, a Florentine carpenter; and Matteo Palmieri, a merchant and statesman.

[6] The *zanaiuolo*'s culinary trade and talent in the kitchen is made clear in these two scenes. If it were still unclear, Berto even calls Polo a "cook" in conversation with Brigida, Ghirigoro's servant, in scene three: "Piglia queste cose, e andate sù, tu e questo cuo-

scene establishes Polo's role and ranking among the characters of the comedy and in the Florentine community as represented on stage. While arriving at Ghirigoro's home with Lapo's servant, Polo seizes the opportunity to retell the mocking made of Ghirigoro at the market and the way he is known there:

Polo	Berto, non disse il tuo padrone, se io intesi bene, che noi portassimo a casa Ghirigoro de' Macci suo suocero queste cose e le cocessimo quivi?
Berto	Sì, disse. Perché?
Polo	Egli ha tolto la figliuola per moglie, eh?
Berto	Tu vedi, Polo.
Polo	Oh! non ha egli il modo, cotesto vecchio, a fare una cena da sé, senza che 'l genero vi abbia a pensare?
Berto	Sì, credo io; ma egli è il più avaro uomo di Firenze.
Polo	Ah! Ah! Egli è quel vecchio che vien qualche volta in mercato con quella sportellina sotto che pare uno famiglio della grascia, e è tanto vantaggioso, che non truova ortolano né beccaio che gli voglia vendere, anzi tutti lo cacciano, faccendogli le baie?
Berto	Sì, sì, cotesto è esso.
Polo	Oh! e' si chiama degli Omacci in mercato, non de' Macci. (4.2)

[Polo Berto, hasn't your master said, if I understood well, that we should bring to the home of Ghirigoro de' Macci's his father-in-law these things and to cook them there? / Berto Yes, he said that. Why? / Polo He has taken the daughter for a wife, eh? / Berto You understand, Polo. / Polo Oh! He has no way, this old man, to prepare a dinner himself, without his son-in-law taking care of it? / Berto Yes, I think so; but he is the greediest man in Florence. / Polo Ah! Ah! He is that old man who comes to the market sometimes with that small wooden chest under him that seems to be a servant of a chunky woman, and he's so interested in taking advantage of others, that he cannot find vegetable vendor or butcher who wants to sell to him, what's more they all send him away, mocking him at his back. / Berto Yes, yes, that is him. / Polo Oh! and he's called of the Omacci in the market, not de' Macci.]

From Polo's descriptions, the audience gains a mental image of these out-of-scene moments. Ghirigoro, with his little chest under his arm, is turned

co, e mettete in ordine da cena per alle due ore" (4.3). Italics are mine. This use of *cuoco* would confirm what Tommaseo and Bellini report of P. Fanfani's mention of Francesco using the two terms interchangeably.

away by all vendors of vegetables and meat alike, who mock him for his greedy nature. Surely the scene provided comic relief as is common of mini-plots and side action, especially in the *topos* of interaction between a *padrone* and a servile character. The deliveryman is striking because he is not only the creator of satire and not the object, but also not a servant of a specific household debating his master. This role, along with his use of the Florentine *idioma*, carves out a special place for him socially and will distinguish him from other *zanaiuoli*.

Polo's ideas of larger career plans also distinguish him from other *zanaiuoli*. He could own a shop at the market. He would achieve this goal through a scheme of suspect ethical character that he has seen others accomplish:

Berto	. . . E credo, Polo, che gli abbia de' danari; ché io ho conosciuti delli altri così fatti come è egli, che poi alla morte se n'è lor trovato qualche buon gruzzolo.
Polo	Se io piglio sua pratica, io voglio a ogni modo vedere se e' mi vuol prestare dieci ducati, per aprir anch'io un poco di treccone in mercato vecchio.
Berto	Sì, tu hai trovato l'uomo! Io non credo che ti prestasse la fame, quando bene è se la potesse spiccar da dosso.
Polo	Tu la intendi male, Berto; ché questi simili si giungono più facilmente che gli altri, come si mostra loro qualche poco d'utile. E' ne viene un altro in quel mercato, che non vi è pizzicagnolo né treccone né beccaio quasi che non abbia danari di suo: e dànnogli ogni dì qualcosa, e 'l capitale sta fermo. Così vo' fare io con lui.[7]
	(4.2)

[Berto I think, Polo, that he has some money; because I learned of others who are like him, that then at death, they have found a good handful of money. / Polo If I can get close to him, I want at any rate to see if he wants to lend me ten ducati to open for myself too a small shop at the old market. / Berto Yes, you have found your man! I think he would let you starve even when he could help you. / Polo You have misunderstood, Berto; because these men are more easily reached than others, if you show them a little something useful. Another one comes to that market, that there almost isn't a spice vendor or a small foods vendor or butcher who doesn't have some of his money: and giving him every day something, the capital remains intact. This is how I want to handle with him.]

[7] Sanesi notes that *treccone*, as indicated by Tommaseo and Bellini, is a *rivendugliolo*, that is, a 'rivenditore di cose commestibili di poco prezzo'. I've chosen to attempt to translate *treccone* as a small foods vendor, that is, a vendor of food items that have little value and small cost

The scheme plotted by Polo, and presumably others, is intriguing because of its timeless appeal in dealing with credit lenders: offer a little something every day and your capital remains in place. That the deliveryman would seize this opportunity to play on Ghirigoro's supposed foolishness should not shock us. After all, he is simply looking to take advantage of the situation in order to gain a storefront for himself. In fact, the quality of virtù or astuteness valued by Early Modern Florentine society in literature and comedy is well documented.[8] What is important instead is his link to the market area and the seemingly mobile society in which the *zanaiuolo* lives; he can aspire to become a shop owner, and he has seen others do it too.

Polo's direct interaction with Ghirigoro confirms that the deliveryman's social position is more flexible than one might expect. When Polo asks Brigida, Ghirigoro's servant, to hand him the sporta he has brought with him, Ghirigoro hears them from the street and rushes in fearing that he has been discovered. When Ghirigoro threatens Polo, he leaves the old man's home as directed. However, he defends himself against a man of supposedly higher social standing and speaks of his excellent reputation in the community:

Ghirigoro	Fuora, fuora, assassino, ladro, io ti farò impiccare. Sì che è si va così per le case d'altri, eh? Di che cercavi tu sotto quella scala, che non vi sta se non spazzatura? Ribaldo, che credevi tu trovarvi?
Polo	Cercava delle legne per cuocer quelle cose che io ho recate, che le manda il vostro genero.
Ghirigoro	Io non so che genero, io; anzi, cercavi d'imbolarmi qualcosa.
Polo	Ghirigoro, io non fui mai ladro, e vo tutto 'l dì per le case deg-

[8] In their Introduction to *Five Comedies from the Italian Renaissance*, Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero state: "In some comedies . . . the characters who display the most virtù are, suggestively, not male members of the upper classes but servants like Fessenio, men of lesser standing on the make like Ligurio, and women like Lelia or Santilla. This may be simply because virtù was expected of upper-class men and thus was funnier and more interesting to imagine in its lack than in its presence among such individuals. In turn, the power of virtù is clearly more visible and telling when we see it working where one would normally not expect it: in servants, men of lesser standing, and young women . . . Of course, the plot lines of these plays were often drawn from ancient comedies or Renaissance popular stories, both of which genres typically featured clever servants and the weak triumphing over the strong. But from their central role in these comedies it is clear that these themes had special resonance in the sixteenth century as well. The centrality of these themes in Renaissance comedy may also reflect deeper tensions in the period such as an increasing sense of powerlessness in the upper classes related to political and social changes associated with foreign domination and the rise of a more courtly society" (2003: xxiv).

li uomini da bene a cuocere, e sono conosciuto; e non mi avete da dir cotesto.

Ghirigoro Tu m'hai inteso: lievamiti dinanzi, ché io ti spezzerò la testa, ladroncello.

. . .

Berto Ohimè, Ghirigoro, che vuol dire questo?

Ghirigoro Come, che vuol dire? Costui che m'ha mandata tutta la casa sozzopra.

Berto Oh! ei ve l'ha mandato a cuocere Lapo vostro, per farvi onore.

. . .

Ghirigoro Io t'ho detto. Io ho una serva che sa fare da sé. Andatevi tutt'a dua con Dio …

Polo Lasciatemi almen tornar in casa per la mia zana e per la mia sporta.

Ghirigoro Et anche questo non farò. Pàrti ch'ei l'avesse pensata? Aspettami qui, ché te le arrecherò io.

Berto Polo, che ti par di questo vecchio? Riescet'egli come io ti dissi?

Polo Io, per me, non viddi mai il più arrabbiato. E me ne par esser ito bene, che non mi ha rotto la testa.

(4.5)

[Ghirigoro Out, out, assassin, thief, I will have you hung. So it's like this that one goes to the homes of others, eh? Say: what you were searching for under those stairs, where there's nothing if not trash? Ribald, what were you hoping to find there? / Polo I was looking for some wood to cook those things that I have brought here, those that your son-in-law has sent. / Ghirigoro I don't know what son-in-law; instead, you were trying to hide something from me. / Polo Ghirigoro, I have never been a thief, and I go all day long in the homes of good men to cook, and I am well-known; and you shouldn't tell me this. / Ghirigoro You've understood me: get out of my sight, because I will smash your head in, you little thief. / . . . / Berto Ohimè, Ghirigoro, what it is meaning of this? / Ghirigoro How, what do you mean? This one that he sent me has turned my house upside down. / Berto Oh! Your (son-in-law) Lapo has sent him to you to cook, to honor you. / . . . / Ghirigoro I've told you. I have a servant that knows how to handle things on her own. Both of you leave here in peace. / Polo Let me at least return inside to retrieve my basket and my wooden chest. / Ghirigoro I won't let you do this either. You think I haven't thought about it? Wait for me there, and I will bring them to you. / Berto Polo, what did you think about this old one? Was he like I've told you? / Polo I, for myself, have never seen a more angry man. And it seems to me that it has gone well that he hasn't broken my head open.]

Polo remains unharmed by the anger and speech of Ghirigoro and is defended by his friend, Berto. In the end, Polo's market-stall scheme presumably fails as he is booted from Ghirigoro's home, but he is not a thief and will not be treated as one. In La sporta, the zanaiuolo appears to be a free agent of Florentine society, equipped with aspirations and culinary talent.

Gelli's second comedy *Lo errore* is stated to have been performed by the Compagnia de' Fantastici in Florence in 1555 at a dinner offered by Roberto di Filippo Pandolfini. The Fantastici's performance on this occasion is announced in the prologue as are the similarities to Machiavelli's *Clizia*: an older man, Gherardo, has fallen in love with a younger woman, Ginevra, wife of Averardo Tieri. In order to cover up his error he must facilitate a match between his son and the woman's daughter. In Lo errore the zanaiuolo is met on the street by Gherardo at the beginning of Act three. Unlike *La sporta*'s Polo, this deliveryman remains nameless. He is charged with bringing alimentary goods from the market to Gherardo's home and delivering a message to the old man's wife about preparing lunch. In this case, the conversation between Gherardo and the deliveryman develops from concerns about the amount of payment to patterns of insult and injury to the profession. Gherardo confirms a *zanaiuolo*'s association with carrying and cooking food, and then when prodded, he describes negatively the behaviors of those who practice the trade:

ZANAIUOLO Aggio facenna.
GHERARDO E dove vai?
ZANAIUOLO In Via Pentolini.
GHERARDO Oh! odi: tu puoi fare un viaggio e due servigi.
ZANAIUOLO E come? Di' sù.
GHERARDO Posa anche queste cose in casa mia, ché sto quivi in quelle case nuove da Santo Ambruogio.
ZANAIUOLO Orsù, mette qua.
GHERARDO Sai tu il nome mio?
ZANAIUOLO Eh! Io ti conosco ben, sì, ché ti veddi l'altra sera quando ero a cuocere in casa Binno Bostichi.
GHERARDO Ah, sì, sì, Oh! tien qui; va' via.
ZANAIUOLO E che vuoi tu che faccia d'un quattrino?
GHERARDO E che vuoi tu? Che io ti dia una dote, che non rallunghi venti passi la via?
ZANAIUOLO Dammi tre quattrini, se vuoi che ci vada; se no, non ci voglio annare.
GHERARDO Io non me ne meraviglio, poi che tu di' che sei un di quel che vanno a cuocere.
ZANAIUOLO E che facciamo noi altri che anniamo a cuocere?
GHERARDO Cavate tanto, la prima cosa, da il pollaiolo, da il pizzicagnolo, da il treccone, e da tutti quegli da chi voi fate comperare le

cose; e, d' poi, rubate tanto, oltre lo aver trovato che i colli de' polli e le spezierie che avanzano hanno a essere vostre, nelle case ove voi entrate, che voi non stimate poi questi guadagnuzzi d'un quattrino.

Zanaiuolo Oh! ve' bella cosa che ha trovato questo vecchio.

Gherardo E io ti direi delle altre cose che tu non pensi che io sappia; ché vi beete in cucina, quando voi non siate veduti, insino alla peverada de' capponi, come si fa propriamente l'acqua d'orzo.

Zanaiuolo Te dirò; questo si fa per star sano.

Gherardo E tu vedi bene che voi altri che andate a cuocere avete certe carni fini e certi visi rossi che voi parete fanciulle lisciate; e non siate scuri, come questi altri che non attendono se non a far servigi.

(3.1, italics mine)

[Zanaiuolo I've got things to do. / Gherardo And where are you going? / Zanaiuolo In Via Pentolini. / Gherardo Oh! listen: you can make one trip and do two services. / Zanaiuolo And, how? Tell me now. / Gherardo Take also these things to my home, because I am near there in those new homes in Sant'Ambrogio. / Zanaiuolo Ok, let's go! Put it here. / Gherardo Do you know my name? / Zanaiuolo Eh! I know you well, yes, because I saw you the other evening when I was cooking in the home of Binno Bostichi. / Gherardo Ah, yes, yes, oh! Take this; go on. / Zanaiuolo And what do you want me to do with a quattrino? / Gherardo What do you want? That I give you a dowry, for something that doesn't lengthen your trip twenty feet? / Zanaiuolo Give me three quattrini, if you want me to go; if not, I don't want to. / Gherardo I'm not surprised, given that you say you are one of those who go to cook. / Zanaiuolo And what do we do those of us who go to cook? / Gherardo You take a lot, in the first place, from the poulterer, the spice vendor, from the small foods vendor, and from all of those from whom you buy things; and, then, you steal a lot, other than having taken the necks of chickens and the spices that are left over you take to be your own, in the homes in which you enter, and you don't consider small earnings of a quattrino. / Zanaiuolo Oh! well, what nice things this old man has found. / Gherardo And I'll tell you other things that you don't think I know; that you drink in the kitchen when you aren't seen, even at the pepper sauce of the capons, like one does properly with the water of orzo. / Zanaiuolo I'll tell you; this is done to stay healthy. / Gherardo And you see that you others that go to cook have certain fine skins and particular red faces that you seem glamorous young girls; and you are not dark-skinned, like these others that attend to performing services.]

Initially the *zanaiuolo* responds in a sarcastic manner to the accusations of Gherardo, noting, predictably, his age and the grand novelty of what the gentleman has said. When Gherardo mentions the custom of drinking

broth while preparing foods, the nameless deliveryman defends the tradition as healthy. After an allusive mention of complexion and delicate skin, he quickly ends the conversation accepting whatever payment Gherardo prefers. As the deliveryman walks the streets of Florence to perform his charge, he laments the lengthy conversation necessary to ensure employment. He arrives at Gherardo's home, delivering briefly and efficiently the goods and message of his employer. His service to the comedy is complete (3.1).

The *zanaiuolo* of *Lo errore* possesses a spirited character similar to Polo's of Gelli's *La sporta*. His vibrant exchange with Gherardo suggests the liberty and entrepreneurship of someone briefly employed by a gentleman. Not only is this zanaiuolo emancipated from the household and authority of one *padrone*, demonstrated by the fact that he takes temporary work in a casual street encounter, but also he negotiates payment. He chooses to complete the service for less than he had requested, but the conclusion to the scene is most likely motivated by expediency. It should not suggest that the deliveryman could not have obtained the sum for which he had asked; instead, the deliveryman's free license to discuss terms of service signifies mobility in social classes.

In the end, although maintaining a more flexible social position with respect to a stylized servant, the deliveryman is not safe from the criticism of Gherardo. Alongside stereotypes of kitchen workers, the striking new characteristic of this nameless zanaiuolo is his markedly Southern dialect. Chiara Cassiani, a Gellian scholar, suggests that the dialect in question is Neapolitan: "nell'*Errore* viene introdotto anche il dialetto napoletano di uno zanaiuolo che discute con Gherardo" (254n46). She contends that he speaks in Neapolitan by citing "io aggio disposto sei volte di non far loro servigi; e poi non me ne saccio guardare, che gli venga lo cancaro" (3.1). I agree with Cassiani that this deliveryman is surely from the Southern half of the peninsula because *saccio*, *aggio*, *annare* bespeak a southern vernacular, including the Neapolitan. Yet, with no further evidence to confirm the *zanaiuolo*'s speech as exclusively Neapolitan, I do not believe we can exclude other Southern dialects. Thirteen years after Gelli's first comedy, the traits of the *zanaiuolo* seem to have shifted. In the course of the act, he is berated for attributes and customs linked to an entire profession and to culinary trades more broadly. He is known to take things without permission from the kitchens in which he works; he drinks broth (and more) on the job. Lo zanaiuolo is no longer the author of ridicule, but the object of derision.[9] In

[9] Furthermore, he is scorned by the amorous *senex* of *Lo errore* who is usually the most ridiculed of all the characters in the history of comedy. Ridicule towards the amorous senex belongs to the standards of sixteenth-century comedy as it did to Greek and

this way, the deliveryman assumes a lower position on the social ladder of the comedy.

In addition to the everyday realities of deliverymen, the scene provides the reader or spectator with information about the changing cityscape of Florence. In fact, the interlocutors make enough references to town spaces that we may map out the area in which spectators should envision this scene. If we follow this spatial aspect of the encounter, we hear from Gherardo that he lives in the newly constructed homes in Sant'Ambrogio. We notice that the deliveryman is headed toward Via Pentolini, and from Gherardo's remark that the *zana* can double his service in one trip, their conversation must be somewhere that allows him to frequent both places.[10] Perhaps surprisingly, previous use of Gelli's comedies as historical and objective documents is noted in Armand De Gaetano's study: "customs and institutions of his environment [are represented] by showing both sides of the coin . . . [this] is confirmed by the fact that his observations have been used as documents for sociological studies on the Italian family in the sixteenth century, for example, in the works of Nino Tamassia" (1976: 329). Regardless of how extensively or faithfully we would like to analyze the intersection of factual urban development and its representation on stage

Roman comedy. This fact can be partially explained by the morally charged nature of ideas about the family and society in conventional comedy. An elderly man who does not know his personal limits and demonstrates himself unwise by attempting to court, or bed, a much younger woman is often found belittled by the end of the plot. That the senex has the upper hand in *Lo errore* over a fellow class member is indicative of the deliveryman's social class.

[10] Today Via Pentolini is the section of Via de' Macci between Piazza Sant'Ambrogio and Via Ghibellina. It had taken the name Pentolini because of an osteria famous for a door to which small pots (pentolini) had been attached. It's indicated that these small pots were used by the oste to sell mustard. The section of the street between Via dell'Agnolo and Piazza Sant'Ambrogio remained Via Pentolini at least through 1731 when a Florentine map drawn by Ferdinando Ruggieri was published while the section between Via dell'Agnolo and Via San Giuseppe had taken on the name Via de' Macci (La grande guida delle strade di Firenze 2003: 355). Additionally, there's overlap of the surname Macci in that area of the city with Gelli's plays. The foolish senex from *La sporta* is Ghirigoro de' Macci. Florentine records indicate that the Macci family fell from grace, so to speak, and had their houses and towers confiscated by the Republic, at which time they moved to the area of Via Pentolini and Via Malborghetto (2003: 355). The latter was named purposefully for the presence of the miserable homes of the poorest population of the city. Given that Ghirigoro is not wealthy (his fear of losing his small fortune is extreme) and that he is ridiculed, it wouldn't be unlikely in my opinion that the spectators of the comedy, likely only academy members, had this area of the city in mind. As a bare minimum I believe that the relationships between Florentine cultural history and Gelli's comedies are endless and prove his zealous attention to theatrum mundi.

there is little doubt that the intimate municipal feeling of Gelli's comedy is a conscious choice made by the author.[11] The *zanaiuolo* is one of the realistic implications of Gelli and his fellow playwrights' spirit of civic comedy. The deliveryman is the catalyst for dynamism and spontaneity in their representation of the city and their comic theatre.

Giovan Maria Cecchi's *L'ammalata*

Giovan Maria Cecchi is certainly the most prolific of mid-sixteenth century Florentine playwrights and the most celebrated dramatist of the Florentine Academy. In public life, he exercised the profession of notary, was involved in the wool trade, and occupied the important public offices of proconsul and Chancellor of the Maestri di Contratto. As an author, Cecchi experimented in many genres: prose, treatise, poetry, and theatre. With over fifty theatrical works, including comedy, intermezzi, sacred drama and farce, Cecchi's dramatic production was tireless. The playwright's twenty-one comedies – some lost today – consistently refashion and infuse tried-and-true classical and Renaissance models with sparks of innovation; such is the case of his masterpiece, *L'Assiuolo.* Although they contain mirror images of Florentine life, several of Cecchi's comedies have remained unpublished and unedited for centuries. Such is the case of *L'ammalata* of which there is no record of performance or printing before 1855. Like the other members of the Florentine Academy, Cecchi included present-day circumstances in the plots and settings of his comedies, allowing them to be analyzed for the social realities of the time. Franco Fido has commented on Cecchi's innovation in his famous *L'Assiuolo* by drawing attention to his particular contribution via language, which signals departure from his models. Whereas others – Machiavelli and il Lasca – have defended their stylized cast yet modern comical language in prologue for the purpose of *diletto* or talent, Fido claims that "for the bourgeois and religious Cecchi, author of many dramas for nuns and high-school teenagers, the exceptionally colorful language of *L'Assiuolo* needs a specific justification, and this is found in a closer, realistic approach to everyday life, presented as a consequence of, and a compensation for, giving up the traditional devices and stylizations" (89).

L'ammalata is thus another example of Florentine comedy that com-

[11] Chiara Cassani comments on the spontaneity of street encounters and their effect on the genre in this way: "Il fatto che i personaggi si incontrino continuamente per la via, vicino alle loro abitazioni, accresce la freschezza e la spontaneità della messa in scena. . . . Colpisce anche la precisione delle determinazioni ambientali che richiamano i luoghi a lui più familiari, le chiese e le strade di Firenze . . ." (2006: 254).

municates urban reality through the encounter of a zanaiuolo. In 4.4, a deliveryman appears onstage carrying a letter. The task is similar to that of a unnamed zanaiuolo of Francesco D'Ambra's *I Bernardi*, but Cecchi's deliveryman does not fail to mention his talent in the kitchen. The zanaiuolo also provides his name – Gian Pitto – and where one can easily find him should his services be needed in the future. The one scene interaction between Gian Pitto and Alesso, a nobleman, remains civil, but we will notice immediately Gian Pitto's southern vernacular. We also notice that Gian Pitto orients himself with relative ease in the conversation, and that this representation is reminscient of Gelli's first *zanaiuolo*, Polo. No negative stereotypes associated with the *zanaiuolo* of *Lo Errore* are mentioned, notwithstanding how we may interpret his dialect, and the interaction is pleasant enough for a nobleman-servile figure encounter:

Zanaiuolo Buon iorno a Vostra Sinnoria. Sta qui
Un servidor che s'annomannna il Volpe?
Alesso Sì, sta. Che cosa volevi da lui?
Zanaiuolo Darli quista. Ello in casa, che tu sacci?
Alesso Non c'è, no.
Zanaiuolo I' torneraggio.
Alesso Mostra qua:
Da chi vien?
Zanaiuolo Non lo saccio, messer, ma
La deggio dar in mano a isso.
Alesso Dà
Qua, ché è mio famiglio; che saranno
Imbasciate di donne.
Alesso Sempre quanno
Lo zana porta lettere, ti pienzi
Che sieno polli?
Alesso Oh! che gli è il vostro solito.
Zanaiuolo Per guardagnare io porterei imbasciate
Allo diabol.
Alesso Dà qua, ch'io ti faro
Servigio.
Zanaiuolo Tu me togli un'altra gita.
Ma famme, ve', di grazia buon servizio.
Alesso Sì, sì.
Zanaiuolo Me ne risposo, vedi, sopra
De te. Vuo' tu accomandarme niente?
Alesso Vatti con Dio.
Zanaiuolo O messer, se tu avessi
A far convito, oh! i' son valente coco,
Potta de santa mamma mia! io saccio

Far buon arrosti, pasticci…
ALESSO Sta bene;
Io t'arò a mente.
ZANAIUOLO Se tu hai bisogno,
Vien pur là in Mercato, e si domanna
Gian Pitto.
ALESSO Or via.
ZANAIUOLO Così me chiamo. Addio:
Mi raccomanno.
(4.4)

[ZANAIUOLO Good day your Lordship. Is he here / a servant that is named the Fox? / ALESSO Yes, he's here. What did you want from him? / ZANAIUOLO To give him this. Is he in the house that you know? / ALESSO He's not here, no. ZANAIUOLO I'll come back. ALESSO Show it here. / Who's it coming from? ZANAIUOLO I don't know, sir, but / I have to give it in hand to him. ALESSO Give / It here, because he's my servant, and it's probably / Messages from women. ZANAIUOLO Always when / A zana brings letters, you think /That they are chickens? ALESSO Oh! Here we are again, that's your usual. / ZANAIUOLO To earn some money, I would bring messages // To the devil. ALESSO Give it here, that I will do you / This service. ZANAIUOLO You're taking away another trip from me. / But you can do me this service, with thanks. / ALESSO Yes, yes. ZANAIUOLO I have answered, you see, above / From you. Do you not want to accommodate me with anything? / ALESSO Go with God. ZANAIUOLO O sir, if you should need / To have a banquet, oh! I am a valiant cook, / I swear on my mother's cunt ! I can / Make good roasted meats, pies and hashes… ALESSO That's well. / I'll keep you in mind. ZANAIUOLO If you need, / Come even there, to the Market, and ask for / Gian Pitto. ALESSO Now go. ZANAIUOLO That's my name. Goodbye; / Remember me.]

The *zanaiuolo*'s utterances in this scene confirm his usual aptitude and employment in the kitchen, and he even suggests where he can be found, at the market.[12] The market in question in *L'ammalata* is most likely the *mer-*

[12] While Gaetano Milanesi suggests an idiomatic meaning for the deliveryman's question "ti pienzi / che siano polli?" which would characterize the *zanaiuolo* negatively, I argue that this line may not be so easy to interpret. Milanesi states that this question can be intended as 'fare il ruffiano' (to be a ruffian). We could imagine a scenario in which the deliveryman would be a ruffian and the *Grande Dizionario dell'Italiano* mentions that the *zanaiolo* can be identified as such in "Proprietà di mercato vecchio" by Antonio Pucci. By Pucci, he is mentioned alongside other undesirables: "E meretrici vi sono e ruffian / battifancelli, zanaiuoli e gaioffi / e i tignosi e scabbiosi cattani". However, lo *zanaiuolo* is commonly encountered carrying food items, particularly those that he intends to cook in the home. Therefore, scenes with deliverymen from multiple other comedies indicate that a literal association of *zanaiuoli* with chicken

cato vecchio, occupied today by the Piazza della Repubblica at the heart of Florence's historic center. In Gelli's *La sporta* Polo also mentions the *mercato* as the space in which he would open his *bottega da treccone* and where Ghirigoro would attempt to negotiate with food vendors and be laughed away. Polo's narration of Ghirigoro's laughable encounters with food vendors and his own daydream of opening a bottega there depict a lively space of exchange, while Gian Pitto's pitch for his services leads a reader to believe that he, alongside other *zanaiuoli*, congregate at the *mercato vecchio* awaiting short-term labor, delivering goods and post or preparing meals in different homes. As is the case with Gelli's *Lo errore* in which the deliveryman and his interlocutor depict Florence through mention of Sant'Ambrogio and Via dei Pentolini, Cecchi's *L'ammalata* pinpoints the old market as a space of encounter and contractual day labor in mid sixteenth-century Florence.

The Place of Zanaiuoli in Comedy and the Urban Environment

The appearance of the *zanaiuolo* suggests the playwrights' desire to mirror contemporary society and to widen the coterie of cast members with whom the audience could identify its surroundings. A realistic portrayal of the community – and language – in an appeal to audiences is not rare. We know well from prologues that Gelli and Cecchi placed great emphasis on the Ciceronian creed, and the idea of special resonance or willful playfulness with the social and political tensions of the period is often a basic tenet of scholarship on Italian Renaissance comedy. Yet beyond a simple creed, the choice of food purveyors functions as an observation of dialogue across social classes and advances ordinary motifs as dignified for academy stages.

Gelli and his works serve as both example and model of the faithful representation of Renaissance Florence and of the popularizing ideology of the Florentine Academy. In Paul Oskar Kristeller's preface to De Gaetano's *Giambattista Gelli and the Florentine Academy: The Rebellion against Latin*, Kristeller agrees with his pupil's conclusion that Gelli and the Florentine Academy's success aided in the "popularization of public instruction for a wider public of curious and educated laymen" (1976: vii-viii). Gelli's ideas to propagate education through use of the Tuscan vernacular and the academy's interest in society and education are the focus of De Gaetano's study. Sanesi, too, centers in on the fate and dignity of the *volgare* as well as the role of the intellectual in his appraisal of Gelli's work. In an edition of Gelli's theatre, the scholar attests:

(*polli*) also exists.

> [Gelli] volle, cioè, dimostrare con la maggior parte dei suoi scritti ai pertinaci oppositori della nostra lingua che l'italiano è adattatissimo alla trattazione di tute le discipline, storiche, filologiche, filosofiche, scientifiche, e che in italiano, né più né meno che in latino, si possono esprimere alti e profondi e fin anche astrusi concetti: sostenendo, al tempo stesso (e attuando in forma concreta questa sua convinzione) che gli uomini sapienti non devono chiudersi orgogliosamente nella ròcca solitaria della loro dottrina ma devono, anzi, liberalmente comunicarla a quel maggior numero di persone che sia loro possibile. (1968: 12-13)

In the footsteps of Renaissance comedy fathers like Machiavelli, the dimensions of Gelli and Cecchi's comedies are municipally-focused with fresh and communicative language.[13] Gelli's description of language in his Ragionamento sopra le difficultà del mettere in regole la nostra lingua speaks to his belief in the continual mutability of all things in this world, including la lingua: "ella è viva, e va all'insù." Such attention to the detailed present of language parallels the dedication to the ever-changing faces of social composition and furthers the popularizing spirit of the dramas in question.

In addition, Cassiani has recently looked at Gelli's dialogic corpus and has found within it what she calls a cultural project of dialogue. She suggests that Gelli's works point to a philosophy of "things" in an all-inclusive community:

> Gelli intende proporre una filosofia di "cose" all'interno di una comunità dove "alto" e "basso", in senso sociale e culturale, non siano separati e possono dialogare. . . . anche le commedie si rilevano parte integrante dell'unitario progetto politico e culturale di Gelli, incentrato sulla costruzione di un'etica civile nella quale la dimensione privata e quella pubblica si fondono armonicamente. (2006: 250-1)

In this company, I contend that we can make sense of Gelli's and the Florentine Academy's comedies as a part of the cultural project through the staging of food purveyors. The interaction of *zanaiuoli* in more or less spontaneous street/piazza scenes brings about the physical and verbal dialogues of "high" and "low" members of society. It is in this way that deliverymen cause multiple strata of society to communicate and coexist, and they demonstrate the peculiarities of a specific society's relationships among urban citizens, their foods and meals. The comedies coming out of the Florentine Academy are embedded so deeply and precisely in one city's cultural make-up that they furnish local professionals seemingly unidentifi-

[13] It seems Gelli had opportunity to visit the meetings at the Orti Oricellari where he would have listened to the debates on the volgare. As such he remained faithful to the suggestion of Machiavelli for the cultural rebirth of Florence.

able on other city-state stages.

As these professions emerge onstage, the local feel of the vernacular also informs the characterization of the *zanaiuolo* as an outsider or a foreigner. De Gaetano also attends to Gelli's particular attention to *idioma*: "[He showed] a thorough mastery of the Florentine tongue and a keen sensitivity for its usage . . . His perception of linguistic changes and distinction was keen in differences of speech and intercommunal variation" (1976: 47).[14] Franco Fido suggests further that "if, as we have seen, the Renaissance playwright does not feel responsible for the structure or "order" of comedy, established once for all by the Latins and handed down to him through Ariosto or Bibbiena, he does know that in language lies his peculiar contribution to theater . . ." (89). In the case of Gelli and the Florentine Academy, the attentiveness to language and the presence of food purveyors together further a playwrights' innovation.

One could argue that the Academy employed two parallel strategies: one that focuses on accessible and contemporary language to identify society with the stage, and the other that uses the particulars of the stage, cast, and setting to reinforce the capacity of that accessible language. With Gelli at its charge, the Florentine Academy's cultural production opened the doors between what takes place in comedy and in civic life, how the public comprehends through language and identifies its community. What *zanaiuoli* do onstage and in street encounters, this type of Florentine comedy attempts to do for public instruction: blurring boundaries of social interaction. These two tendencies, one in drama, one in communal intellectual life, confirm the accessibility of popular (culinary) culture and the purposeful inclusion of middle class habits and authentic lower class individual, at times in addition to, at times in place of, stereotypical, classically modeled characters such as servants and *facchini*.

These conclusions bring the playwrights and their works into a domain that can be understood through the concept of cultural mobility. Stephen Greenblatt and his colleagues argue in their *Manifesto* that not only in the twenty-first century may we associate cultural change with radical mobility; cultural mobility allows us to comprehend patterns of meaning created by human societies in virtually all periods (2010 *Manifesto*). If new figures in comedy are indicative of the ever-changing constitution of society, our analysis can be pushed past holistic, rooted and undamaged concepts of elite Renaissance culture. A unitary vision of Renaissance culture remains prevalent today: it is tempting to reassert the persistence of classical mod-

[14] Pirandello certainly feels similarly. He comments in his essay *Sull'umorisimo* that if Gelli would have been born English and everyone would have read his works, the Italian sense of humor would be a household name.

els and imitative practices because they are so easily recognized in the form and ethos of early Renaissance masterpieces. Indeed, Gelli and Cecchi rely heavily on the works of their predecessors. Moreover, evidence available to use concerning court theatre and majestic events that displays ideals of Neoplatonism, of comedy and of spectacle is far more conspicuous. Yet, deliverymen allow us to notice a less obvious set of relationships proving that Florentine culture is also constantly in flux. Observations of contemporary realities are confirmed not only by adopting the simple phrase "questo non è Atene" or "moderna non antica, volgare non latina" in prologue, but also through the composition of the cast. I would argue that this element of comedy proves most convincingly that societies and their cultures are mobile. Changing constitutions in the cast is an excellent example of radical cultural mobility because it counters a naïve notion that inland Renaissance communities like Florence were coherent *nationally or ethnically.*[15]

In conclusion, the role of a *zanaiuolo* is also characterized by his ability to move in "contact zones" where cultural goods are exchanged. Greenblatt puts forth that "certain places are characteristically set apart from inter-cultural contact; others are deliberately made open, with the rules suspended that inhibit exchange elsewhere. A specialized group of 'mobilizers' – agents, go-betweens, translators, or intermediaries – often emerges to facilitate contact" (2010 *Manifesto*). For instance, while the court and the home are traditionally set apart from inter-cultural contact, a piazza, convergence of streets, is a deliberately open area, especially on stage in theatre, that allows for exchange. As it concerns a *zanaiuolo*, this exchange establishes the deliveryman as the intermediary of urban citizens and their foods, creating contact between the market, the street, and the home. Writing at the end of the sixteenth century, Tommaso Garzoni grasped the ways that societies and professions were changing. His *Piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* forwards the notion of a more horizontal society in the metaphor of a piazza. It is in these piazze or convergence of streets that we find the food purveyors of mid-century drama who indicate mobility in an otherwise static cast in Florentine communities.

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[15] We widely recognize, and rightfully so, that coastal cities, such as Venice, and Rome, as the center of the Catholic Church, were ethnically diverse, while Tuscany is often quietly assumed to be more uniform in its cultural make-up.

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